

Depression

What is depression?

Depression is an illness that affects your mind, body, thoughts and mood. About twice as many women suffer from depression than men. Depression that exists for long periods of time and does not go away is referred to as “clinical depression” and is a very serious illness. It is much more than just “feeling blue” for a few hours or for a couple of days.

What are the causes of depression?:

Depression can be caused by many things.

- It can run in families, or be triggered by social factors such as the stresses of being a working or single mother, caring for elderly family members, or financial or relationship problems.
- You may experience depression when you are going through painful and difficult events in your life.
- Depression may also be brought on by certain medications for illnesses such as cancer, arthritis, heart problems and high blood pressure.

Symptoms of depression

If you have some of these symptoms that last longer than two weeks, see your health care provider.

- Feeling empty, sad or anxious
- Feeling tired, having no energy
- Feeling restless and irritable most of the time
- Crying more than usual
- Feeling worthless, helpless, hopeless and guilty



- Having no interest or joy in life
- Having trouble sleeping, or waking up very early in the morning
- Having problems eating too much or too little food
- Thinking about suicide and death
- Having trouble concentrating, remembering and making decisions
- Having physical problems that don't go away when you take medicine such as headaches, stomach problems, and pains in your body

Getting Help

Most people with depression feel better once they begin treatment. The most common treatments are medication and psychotherapy (talking to a specially-trained counselor or therapist). It may take a few weeks or even months, but most people will experience a positive change in mood or outlook.

Here are some ways to get help for your depression:

- Talk to your health care provider about how you've been feeling. Get a physical examination to determine if medicines or illnesses might be causing you to feel depressed. Your health care provider can refer you to someone who can treat depression.
- Talk to a friend, family member, religious leader, or someone that you trust about how you are feeling. S/he can help you find someone to treat your depression.
- Get more information on-line by visiting the websites below:

National Institute of Mental Health

www.nimh.nih.gov

National Foundation for Depressive Illness, Inc.

www.depression.org

National Depressive and Manic Depressive Association

www.ndmda.org

The National Mental Health Association of Georgia

www.nmhag.org

This information appears courtesy of the National Office on Women's Health
www.4woman.gov

*This information is provided as a source of education and information and is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment.
The OWH recommends consultation with your doctor or health care professional.*

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www.communityhealth.state.ga.us